

son should waste the Sabbath in self-indulgence and neglect of God's service. It is a shame and a sin that heads of families should neglect to take their children to church as often as possible, and thus throw around them the sacred influence of religion. If your children grow up with no other training than business or pleasure affords, what can you expect of their future? There is nothing so sad as the spectacle of irreligious young people, and in the great majority of cases the fault lies with parents who were indifferent toward the duties and responsibilities of religion, who neglected the sacred duties and privileges of divine worship, who failed to throw around their children the restraining and spiritualizing atmosphere of the church. It is not a question of your own personal comfort, or preference, or entertainment, that is involved in this matter of church going. It is not a question of the gifts or graces of the preacher. Far higher considerations are involved, the honor of religion, the service of the Master, the worship of God, the salvation of the community; and the man who is awake to these vital responsibilities will not let a small matter keep him from going to church. Then there is the necessity of maintaining the unity, the solidarity, the fellowship of the church, as a band of brothers where the weak are strengthened by the sympathy, society and support of the strong. The church cannot succeed unless it maintains the strongest communal and fraternal bond between all the members, and there is nothing that so weakens that bond as "neglecting the assembling of yourselves together."

Form the habit of regularly going to church with your children, and in this way you form for them this important habit, and who can tell how much it will influence all their future lives for their happiness and prosperity in this world and their well being in the world to come.

Candidates for the Ministry

A note of great perplexity sounds from every ecclesiastical gathering of every denominational body concerning the scarcity of candidates for the ministry. What is to be done about this thing? The empty pulpits are multiplying in the land, while the young talent of the church is seeking business openings and professional careers. There seems to be little early consecration, a miracle unless it has its beginnings in a spiritual home, a godly household, where Christ and not mammon abides. Does the scarcity of ministerial buds argue a perversion of the old stock? Are there fewer and fewer homes where the religious atmosphere prevails? Are there fewer family altars, or more where the flames of spiritual sacrifice burn dim, and flicker out? There must be something the matter with the home life of the churches, else Christian homes would bear more fruit in the replenishing of the ministry.

Some one blames the "dead line" in the ministry for the falling off of candidates, that pitiful and unreasoning thing which is not of the Lord, no, not by a great distance. "Itching ears, heaping unto themselves teachers," that's the root of this "dead line" which casts off the faithful servant of God just when experience has fitted him for best service. An unreasoning and cruel thing it is, for his ministry first unfits him for any other calling, the salary he gets renders

it impossible for him to accumulate anything, to lay up anything for a "rainy day," and then just when his need is the greatest, a family to educate and provide for, old age coming on, he is turned out to the tender mercies of the world, as helpless and pitiful an object as the world ever saw. He is turned out, and some stripling, who if a lawyer you would not trust with a ten dollar case, or if a doctor you would not take him a neuralgia, is put in charge of a multitude of souls, and reels of yards and yards of seminary eloquence of a Sunday. Do not understand us to depreciate the stripling, for out of such arise good soldiers of the cross, but please do understand us to condemn out of hand the ungodliness of the "dead line" when it is used to set aside the seasoned preacher whose piety and experience, whose long career of steadfast godliness, whose matured wisdom, fits him as no stripling is fit, to minister the Word and shepherd the flock.

It is a perfectly natural sequence that this "dead line" should discourage young men from the ministry. Who wants to enter a service where he is made to see that he will certainly be set adrift one day with as little ceremony as you would turn an old horse into a bare pasture. Very few churches have made any provision whatever, and none have adequate provision, for victims of the dead line. What self-respecting young man wants to face the prospect of being a pauper, or being somebody's servant, after he is fifty? The best of men are human, and all honor belongs to the consecrated man who is willing to be cast off by and by that he may have the great privilege of preaching Christ at least for a time; but while that is a sacrifice which the young candidate and the middle aged preacher may voluntarily assume, it is a sacrifice *which the church has no business to impose*. We raise our voice against it, and we express the hope that it will never become a marked policy of the Brethren church.

If the churches want a full supply of candidates for the ministry, and the very best talent, two things need to be done: First, build up the Christian home. It is true of the ministry as it is of morals, that you must train up a child in the way that he should go. But just at that point is another root of the trouble. There are Christian parents who do not want their bright boys to enter the ministry, knowing what a lifetime sacrifice it will be. We know of only one well provided ministry in the world, and that is the German Baptist ministry. The salaried brethren are not half so well off. He who would enter the salaried ministry must be prepared to make sacrifices that are required of no other.

The second thing that needs to be done is to discourage the unfit. With the clearly marked dead line cutting across a preacher's career at about fifty, the ministry attracts two distinct classes. Class a: The consecrated young man who is willing to make any sacrifice for Christ's sake and the gospel's. Class b: The shallow pated young fellow to whom a salary of three hundred dollars looks to be as big as a mountain; the incompetent, the weak, the nobody who would hardly earn wages at the commonest work. Theological seminaries are today turning loose a number of that sort, either for lack of common sense upon the part of the teachers in those institutions, or because of a woeful lack of respectable raw material out of which to make preachers. Altogether it is a distressing situation, and the church awaits the man who can suggest a remedy.